

1102-258 Lisgar St.,
Ottawa. K2P 0C9

Dr. Maureen Law,
Deputy Minister,
Health and Welfare,
Ottawa.

1 June 1988

Dear Dr. Law,

According to Global television reporter Kathy Lynas, Health and Welfare says it is unable to take a position on environmental sensitivity because the issue is 'deeply controversial' in the medical community.

What you should have known is that the controversy in the medical community is not about whether our concerns are legitimate, but about what doctors should do to help us.

The department's comment is once again damaging to the environmentally sensitive, as it suggests there is some question to our claim that we are intermittently disabled by low levels of pollution, which reflects poorly on the integrity, honesty, and character of people who are environmentally sensitive, and who are directly conscious of their own disabilities.

Such a defamatory comment is generally referred to as slander, and the only defense consists of two elements - that it is true, and that it is in the public's interest to know.

Yet when I contacted the department, (you, the media relations director for the department, and the secretary of the media relations assistant to the Minister, and the office of the director of the Environmental Health Directorate), none of you were able to provide the name of even one doctor who disputes the statements in my brief to the Standing Committee on Health and Welfare, nor were you able to provide even one argument against those claims.

I would encourage members of your department to follow the policy of your Minister, in that he has expressed sympathy for the environmentally sensitive. In any event, you should refrain from making unsupportable damaging comments about any members of the public.

I expect that you will immediately either put forward the arguments to support your damaging comments, (and listen to their rebuttal), or issue a public retraction and enter into discussions with people affected to the end of redressing damages.

Thank you,

DUPLICATE

Chris Brown
(613) 237 0928

cc Sheila Copps
Margaret Mitchell